



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE AIM IN THE HIGH SCHOOL—THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANY-SIDED INTEREST, OR SPECIAL PRE- PARATION FOR LIFE?

---

NATHANIEL BUTLER  
University of Chicago

---

The topic seems to stand slightly in need of restatement. Probably the intent would be more clearly expressed if in place of the phrase "special preparation for life" we were to substitute "preparation for vocation."

Even then the topic involves us in the danger of falling into a fallacy. It seems to set up an antithesis between special preparation on the one hand, and the establishment of the many-sided interest on the other. And if we are not careful, we shall find ourselves talking as if the two were opposed instead of being in relation to each other, and we shall be trying to settle their opposing claims instead of trying to find their true relations.

I believe we have found out in education that in fact the two ends are, in great degree, gained at the same time, by the same processes. Special duties and special tasks educate us. 'Nothing that is worth doing is so special that it has not some general educational value. On the other hand, special preparation, if it is thorough, involves much that at first seems unrelated to it. Thorough technical training involves much that is not purely technical, much that underlies all technical skill, just as health of body underlies all kinds of physical activity.

We have, I believe, found out another thing: that while the two, the establishment of the many-sided interest and preparation for vocation, are indispensable parts of education, and never absolutely separable, the emphasis shifts from stage to stage of the educational process; and that the thing of chief importance in adolescence is the setting up of the many-sided interest, not in opposition to special preparation, but as an indispensable prerequisite to special preparation.

I am to consider this subject "from the university standpoint." I take it for granted that for this discussion it is not important to make a distinction between the college and the university. This distinction we ought, however, to have very clearly in mind, particularly as teachers in a state in which there are three great universities and several excellent colleges. However, my attitude toward the present question, as I understand it, is to be taken from the point of view of that stage of education which succeeds the "secondary" or high-school period. From this point of view I repeat that I believe the main purpose of the secondary school to be to develop and establish the many-sided interest, because that essential function of education is not likely to be performed at all if it is not performed by the secondary school, especially since, in the stage immediately following the secondary stage, preparation for vocation becomes, in a rapidly increasing degree, the absorbing interest.

Let us try to define two words, "culture" and "education."

Perhaps there is no word in our educational vocabulary more in need of precise definition than "culture." Such a definition becomes, however, comparatively easy if we only recall the characteristics of a man whom we consider a man of culture. Two things, I believe, mark him. First, he has a sincere and intelligent interest in "the finer things of life"—in art, music, literature; yes, and in the still finer things—courtesy, friendship, religion. These are what alone give point and meaning to life; for if we do our work and draw our pay in order to do more work and draw more pay, in order to do more work and draw more pay, the whole process is meaningless. We are merely traveling in a circle. But it all takes on meaning and value if, in the intervals of "earning a living," a man knows how to live. The second thing that marks a man of culture is a sincere and intelligent interest in the pursuits of other men. A man must of course be a specialist; but unless he conceives his vocation in its relation to the work and interests of other men, he does not conceive it rightly. It is this that makes a man able to provide for his household, not only a roof and walls for shelter, but a home with the true "atmosphere." It is this that saves us from being mere wage-earners, artisans, tradesmen, and professionals, and makes us citizens. I repeat: The two distinctive marks of culture are the appreciation of the finer things

of life, and intelligent sympathy with all great human interests. It is impossible to explain why anyone should live, save in terms of culture.

We have had many good definitions of "education." Probably none is more familiar than the one attributed to Herbert Spencer, which makes education a preparation for "complete living." The only thing about the definition that is unsatisfactory is that it contains terms that need defining, for complete living is conceived very differently by different people. A still better definition, and one beyond which it seems we shall hardly advance, makes education a training for social efficiency. From any point of view, this definition is felt to be sound.

Perhaps no better illustration of what we mean by "social efficiency" can be found than that afforded by such a game as football. If a man is to be efficient in that game, he must be "socially" efficient. It is inconceivable that he should be efficient for himself alone. He must know what team-work is. Four things will be true of him. First, he will be master of his own particular function in the team. In ideal, at least, he will be able to play his part better than he could play any other part in the team, and he will be able to play his part better than any other man in the team could play it. He will be, therefore, a specialist. But, second, he must be alert and alive physically and intellectually; otherwise, though he may know his part as an expert, he is of no value to the team. Third, he must understand the game as a whole, in order that he may play intelligently with reference to the other ten men. And, last of all, he must have that sort of disposition and attitude which will make him play the game for all it is worth as a clean, honest, honorable, and high-toned man. Each of these requirements, and all of them together, are essential for his efficiency in the game.

The game of football is in this respect a complete analogue of life, and the requisites for efficiency are the same in the two cases. In the order of time, when we come to education, the details are somewhat differently related. For "life" as well as for football, the individual must be, in the first place, alert and alive, intellectually and physically. He must be able to command his faculties and make them do his bidding promptly and well. He must have that peculiar

and somewhat vaguely conceived thing called "power." He must be able to command a hundred per cent. of his resources for any task that is to be done. In the second place, he must possess what we have called general culture, if he is to be in a high degree socially efficient. He must know the game and his relation to it, and must do team-work. In the third place, he must possess that crystallized tendency to sound and appropriate conduct which we call "character." On every hand we are constantly reminded that this must be the great crowning result of education. President Roosevelt is emphasizing this again and again. It is emphasized by the recent startling revelations of the lack of that quality in men in high places. The public press declares over and over again that our schools are not doing their duty unless they turn out good citizens. There seems to be general agreement that the ultimate value of general education is to be expressed in terms, not of intellect, but of character and conduct. The fruit of education should be intelligent and moral conduct. And, in the fourth place, after general education must come preparation for vocation. As Emerson declared, no man can justify his place in the world unless he earns his living.

What I am trying to point out at this moment is that vocation, indispensable to social efficiency, is by no means the whole of social efficiency, and that preparation for vocation is not the whole of education.

Now, I say that among the essential elements for social efficiency, of which special preparation for vocation is one, the peculiar emphasis shifts from stage to stage, and that the high school must concern itself chiefly with the three that are co-ordinate with vocational training, and that precede and underlie the distinctive work of vocational training.

It is a remark of Quick that, when a boy is about to leave school, and we wish to forecast his prospects for a successful career, we ask, it is true: "What does he know? What is the state of his health? What sort of skill does he possess?" But none of these is the essential question. The questions of first importance, as bearing upon his future, are: "What does he love? Whom does he admire and imitate? What interests him?" This same thing is true of a man at any time of life. These are the important questions for the indi-

vidual and for the state of which he is a member. What sort of men and women do you want your schools to turn out? Skilled workmen and masters of professions and vocations? Yes, truly; but surely not that alone, nor chiefly. Professor James reminded us in a public lecture recently that we must cease looking to education for the millennium, because we have found that education makes men only keener and more ingenious in discovering the means of carrying out their desires; that the intellect is only the slave of the passions; and that, while education and culture save us from the grosser crimes, they seem to reveal to us meaner ones. All this, and what it implies, is of course true, if by education we agree to understand only that discipline which trains the individual to think and to know; but we are not so agreed, and were never less so than at this moment. We demand of education that its products be something more than merely intellectual machines for specialized work.

Now, *when* are you going to secure that your boy or girl shall turn out this something more? It is commonplace that at any time of life we are interested only in those things of which we already know something. Herbart, James, the new education, observation, unite to remind us of this. Again, it is commonplace that the time for taking on new interests passes. For a while, say twenty years, our chief business is to get acquainted with the world. Through literature, history, philosophy, and science the individual is getting familiar with the spiritual possessions of his race and the material world in which he lives. The great concern of his education during this period is, in a word, adjustment. Nature says to the child and to the adolescent: "Become familiar with, and master of, the world which is, and is to be, your home." But presently Nature turns the key and says: "No more of this. Your stock in trade is all in. Go to work with what you have. Beyond this there is practically nothing new for you." To change the figure, Nature permits for a while the cutting of windows through which the soul may look out upon the world. The time comes when no more windows may be cut. Before that time it must have been determined whether the soul shall have a general and true, or a narrow and special, view of the world.

The logic of all this seems simple and irresistible: The time for taking on the great general interests of life is precisely the time when

the secondary school has the boys and girls. If, then, you narrow the boy down to special vocational training, you will have a narrow product—a wage-earner, a skilled artisan, but not a citizen. We have always known this. Consider our programs of study. From whatever standpoint, we have reached the same results. Dr. Harris has only put into form what we have always clearly or vaguely known, when he reminds us that education must give to the individual two kinds of knowledge: first, knowledge of the sort that enables men to master the physical world for human uses; and, second, knowledge of the sort that enables men to co-operate with their fellows for higher social ends. Then he reminds us that for this purpose five great groups of subjects must be present in the school curriculum. These are: (1) mathematics and physics; (2) institutions (history, philosophy, politics, etc.); (3) the national literature; (4) foreign languages; (5) science. All this means that we are setting up in the boys and girls the elements of interest in all the great human concerns, in order that the time may never come when they shall be unresponsive to these, and that whatever their vocation may be, they shall be socially efficient. In life there is but one elective, and that is vocation. All the other things enumerated above are the great prescribed constants. Adding to this five-elemented program of study-material the organized social and physical life of the school, we are in a fair way to discharge the function of the high school which President Stryker has declared to be to turn iron into steel, leaving it to the special technical or professional school to shape the steel into an instrument. Or, to drop the figure, we are in a way to give our boys and girls strong and sound bodies, free and independent characters, the ability to form an intelligent opinion, a taste for the finer things of life, agreeable manners, and the ability so to deal with their fellows as to contribute each his full share toward whatever makes for the common welfare.

Let me conclude with these propositions. The boy must live in a many-sided world; he must participate in a many-sided life; he must play his special part, but he must conceive it as a *part* related to other parts. His vocation is indispensable to social efficiency; but not one whit less essential is general intelligence applicable to the larger affairs of home, neighborhood, municipality, and church. The university, with its special technical and professional schools, must concern itself

chiefly with training for vocation. The emphasis in the university must be on what the individual is to do in life. In view of the relation of the many-sided interest to special vocation, and in view of the special period of life that precedes the university period, we refuse to make the secondary school in any degree a trade school. We refuse to specialize too early, in order that we may later specialize more effectively. We keep special preparation, in the sense intended by this topic, out of the high school. We seek, however, the special preparation that consists in establishing interest in the great constants of life, to make the boy forever responsive to the appeals of these interests.

Because we are all for securing the best sort of special preparation, we work to develop the many-sided interest in the boy as his best preparation for life in general, and as an indispensable prerequisite for highest efficiency in whatever turns out to be his chosen vocation.